

Here's what I sent to the Anacortes American. They decided against using this today...

[REDACTED] We returned to Deepwater Bay on August 25 and included those pictures in the folder as well.

For context, my family and I were setting crab pots near the middle and south fish pens on August 19 when we heard odd noises coming from the middle pen. The first distinctive thing we could see was a chain attached to one of the southeast corner bouys dragging on the fish pen deck, followed by the bouy jumping over the deck. That was about 3:30pm. At first we thought workers were moving things around. After a bit, when the underside of the southeast corner of the pen was showing, it became clear something was seriously wrong. Because we couldn't see any workers around, we called 911 (about 3:45pm). That was about the same time we started taking pictures. Thereafter, things just kept changing; albeit slow and unpredictably enough that we couldn't catch anything on video. After making our call to 911, we spotted one worker on the south pen and made contact with him. He said he had called his boss and three guys in a boat arrived on scene about 20 minutes thereafter. They docked their boat on the west side of the pen and walked around on the pen. The workers were able to remove two portions of the pen which looked to be stand-alone docks (for lack of a better description). One of the docks was located on the west side of the pen and looked to contain a generator and fuel tank. The other dock was on the northeast side of the pen and contained, among other things, a storage building (the removal is captured in one of the photos -- see photo 20170819_170228.jpg. You can see the boat to the left of the storage building in the photo. For reference, the dock's original location was on the northeast side of the pen. The photo was taken as the boat and dock neared the northwest side of the pen. They towed the dock to the east side of the south pen). A tug with a boom arrived on scene about 5:00pm and made contact with the south side of the pen. We thought they might try to recover the forklift on the deck but they did not while we were there. A tug boat also arrived a bit later. We were by the pens until 7:00pm or so. By that point, it looked to us that nothing could be done to save the pen.

Interestingly enough, the reason why we were crabbing in Deepwater Bay was because my step-brother called me 2:45pm and told me crabbing was really good by the fish pens and he was headed in. We started going to Deepwater Bay from Anacortes about 3:00pm, and actually met my step-brother in the Guemes Channel. The difference between my step-brother leaving Deepwater Bay and our arrival was probably about 30 minutes. I asked my step-brother if he heard or saw anything while we was out there and he said he had not.

In response to our 911 call, we received calls from an environmental woman with Skagit County (4:05pm), the Coast Guard (4:30pm), Coast Guard environmental man (4:55pm) and DOE (5:19pm). In speaking with those individuals, I got the impression at the beginning of our conversation that they did not understand how large the pen was or the potential damage. I emailed photos of the pen to the Coast Guard at 4:39pm. During our time there, we did not see any official vessels by sea on scene which surprised me. In addition, there was no air traffic either.

It has been suggested that the implosion was caused by unusual tides and currents. Since we were right next to the pens and not experiencing anything abnormal, I don't believe either to be a legitimate cause. In hindsight, the middle pen seemed to be quite a ways south and much closer to the south pen than we had remembered in the past. Images on Google Earth confirm our suspicions; the middle pen was definitely not in the same location on August 19 as it was in the May 2, 2015 Google Earth image (attached). I also understand the middle pen experienced dragging troubles in the last few weeks. That would explain the change in location.

Please let me know if you have any questions or would like any additional information.
Thanks!

